

1. Call to Order

Jim Garnjobst, Chair, called the regular meeting of the Des Moines County Conservation Board to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Des Moines County Conservation Administration Building.

Those Members Present: Jim Garnjobst, LaVon Worley, Angela Vaughan, Cathy Ziglar and James Steer.

Those Members Absent: None

Others Present: Supervisor Beck, Jim Hilkin, David Philabaum, John Toney, Kent Rector, Chris Lee and Office Manager Behne

2. a. Additions and Deletions to Agenda:

Additions to #9 Project Updates:
Big Hollow and Leopold Recreation Area.

Under #12 Informational, add: County budget update.

Bring up from #11 a. New Business Witte Observatory Agreement to discuss at this time. See #11 for board approval of this item.

3. Delegations/Public Input:

a. None

4. a. Approval of Minutes for January 06, 2016:

#09. Motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Cathy Ziglar, to approve the minutes of the January 06, 2016 Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

5. Approval of Report of Activities for January 2016:

#10. a. Motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Angela Vaughan to approve the reports of activity for January 2016. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

6. Approval of Claims for January 2016:

#11. a. Motion by Angela Vaughan, seconded by Cathy Ziglar, to approve the claims for January 2016. Motion passed unanimously by those members present.

7. Acceptance of Donations

- a. John Henk, North Liberty, IA: \$25.00 for the Robert Zaiser Memorial
- b. John & Joyce Wauters: \$500.00 Big Hollow Fundraiser
- c. Dorothy M. Liechty: \$100.00 Robert Zaiser Memorial
- d. J. F. Barr: \$80.00: Annual Big Hollow Donation
- e. Burlington Endurance Athletic Sports Team (BEAST): \$210.58. Donation from the 2015 Susan Denk Fun Run

8. Committee Reports:

- a. **Shooting Range:** LaVon Worley, No report.
- b. **Flint River Trails:** Angela Vaughan, No report.
- c. **Observatory:** Jim Steer reported that the new agreement which has previously been approved was rewritten and reformatted by Director Lee and reviewed and updated in some sections by the SIAC board members.

- d. **REAP:** Cathy Ziglar reported that she recently sent an email to Al Ourth, the official REAP representative for Des Moines County, letting him know that she was the Board's representative for the 2016 year. She wishes for him to know she would like to be more involved during this year.
Lobby day in Des Moines is fast approaching. Director Lee will be at the Capitol.

9. **Project Updates: By Director Lee**

- a. **Starr's Cave Nature Center Upgrades:** The main floor renovations have been completed. Brockway has been contacted to provide a stand-alone heating and air conditioning unit for this area. This installation will allow for the primary furnace to be better utilized for the first and second floors without the need to run all of the time just to climate control the new office area. The cost for this unit, with installation, will be approximately \$4,000.
- b. **Flint River Trail:** Director Lee conducted a field visit to the SCP&P portion of the route with Zach James and two reps from French-Reneker, SEIRPC, on February 04, 2016. This visit was to work toward a justification of a route that would be in compliance with the ADA requirements.
This particular portion of the FRT has presented quite a learning curve as it applies to SCP&P. We have proposed to DOT is proposing to separate the funding sources to accomplish this route. It would not appear that there will be active construction on this trail during the 2016 season.

c. **DOT Mitigation Projects**

- Natural Resource Manager Jeremy Yost is leading the acquisition of the Wasson property east of Hickory Bend. Jeremy will be meeting with DOT and others involved to help keep the project moving. Des Moines County Conservation will likely enter into an agreement for this property to acquire it from the state after mitigation is complete. There are many questions regarding the logistics and costs associated with the easement for this area.
 - DOT's need for a stream mitigation project and BH's needs for assistance on the upstream area do not seem to be working out as initially hoped for.
- d. • The Robert Zaiser Family has donated \$4,350 from the Memorial established for Des Moines County Conservation for the Big Hollow Project.
• The Witte Foundation has just announced that a grant in the amount of \$10,000 has been approved for the new Big Hollow Fundraiser.
- e. Leopold Recreation Area has received a \$15,000 grant from the Fish & Wildlife Service. These monies, along with a donation from the local Pheasants Forever chapter will allow the bottom field to be planted this season. Natural Resource Manager Yost has the seed and he will most probably be able to frost seed this field in early spring.

10. **Old Business:**

- a. **Big Hollow Donor Recognition Wall:** LaVon Worley has been working with an instructor from the Burlington high school. A number of completed designs have been articulated by individual class members. Of those presented, three or four of the drawings interested the Board Members. LaVon will pass on the Board's appreciation for their work.
A bid from Boecker Masonry in the amount of \$9,940.47 was received for the construction of the donor wall. This price does not include the base. The price does include labor and materials.

McClure Masonry, although not a formal bid, indicated that the work would most probably come in at around the \$8,000 to 9,000 amounts as well.

#10. a. Big Hollow Donor Recognition Wall Continued:

Director Lee felt that Conservation staff could pour the base foundation and then purchase materials at cost through a local vendor and a regular BH donor. This could be a considerable savings as our purchases are tax exempt. We would just need a certified mason for the actual construction of the wall. The Board was not particularly interested in going back and asking those bidding to work for only the labor on this project.

Director Lee will go back and ask McClure Masonry for a formal bid.

Wapsi Valley Archeology has presented a proposal for the layout and items deemed necessary to be in compliance with the SHPO requirements for our kiosk. The price for their proposal is \$4,987.65. This amount does not include the actual signage that will physically be placed on the kiosk once it is put in place at Big Hollow.

#12. A motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Angela Vaughan, to approve having Wapsi Valley Archeology complete the design for the needed sign in the amount of \$4,987.65. Motion passed unanimously by all members present.

11. New Business:

a. **Witte Observatory Agreement. This item of business was conducted** under additions and deletions:

The Agreement for the Southeast Iowa Astronomy Club, Witte Observatory has been reviewed and agreed upon with the board and SIAC members. President John Toney signed the new 5 year agreement for the club and Jim Garnjobst; Chairman signed the document for the Des Moines County Conservation Board.

#13. Motion by Jim Steer, seconded by Angela Vaughan, to approve the Agreement between Des Moines County Conservation and the Southeast IA Astronomy Club as presented. Motion passed unanimously by those members present. Agreement(s) signed by Board Chair Jim Garnjobst and SIAC President John Toney.

b. **SCNC Alcohol request** – Director Lee requested that staff be allowed to bring their own beverages for a staff party to be held on February 12th.

#14. A motion by Jim Steer, seconded by Angela Vaughan, to approve the use of beer and wine at the Nature Center at the Staff Party. Motion passed unanimously by all members present.

c. **Camp and program fees:** Director Lee and Environmental Education Manager Rector have been going over our summer camp and program fee structure. At this time it is being requested to restructure the fees to reflect the revenue needed to successfully complete the camps and continue to provide the quality delivered in the past. The past fee structure was a 5 - day camp for \$30.00. A 3 - day camp was \$20.00 and the 2 - day camps were \$10.00. All camps had a limit of 12 kids per camp. The requested change for this summer will be that all camps are \$10.00 per day with a limit of 15 kids per camp. This rate would bring a 5 – day camp to \$50.00 etc. This will allow us to increase camp size by 3 per and help us to reach more children for summer camp. This structure also allows us to meet our objectives and starts us toward a future financial stability for this particular program. This might be considered a large jump in cost; however, it is in line with all of the other camps that are provided in our area.

Currently an online registration company, Campdoc.com has been contacted as a provider for our summer camp registrations. A fee of \$4.00 per person is charged for their service. Campdoc.com will also permit camper medical information to be stored in a secure environment and be on hand as needed by staff. More information will be made available on this program as it becomes available.

#15. A motion by Angela Vaughan, seconded by Jim Steer, to raise the fee structure to \$10.00 per day with a limit of 15 youth per camp. Vaughan, Steer, Ziglar and Worley Aye. Garnjobst, Nay. Motion passed.

- d. **Hickory Bend land acquisition:** Director Lee had previously forwarded material concerning the location of a property being offered. This property is just south of Hickory Bend and would make a great addition to the public property we already own. The owner came to us wanting Conservation to have the first opportunity to purchase this as he is very aware it is contiguous to our property. This property offers many opportunities for the public. Opportunities of this nature are seldom available. This would supplement a projected 62 acres that will have no cost to Des Moines County if the ongoing DOT mitigation project proceeds as planned. Director believes that this 88 acres and its location would score very well on a REAP or Wildlife Habitat Stamp Grants. The property already has good CRP and native grass cover. The timber although previously harvested, has been well managed and the regeneration of oak and hickory will be a continued asset. Director requested that the board approve an appraisal in order to find out what this property would come in at. Depending on the results we will be in a better position to determine our options. If we decide no then it would only cost the price of the appraisal to make the determination.

#16. A motion by LaVon Worley, seconded by Jim Steer, to have an appraisal completed on the Hickory Bend land acquisition and to sit down with IA Natural Heritage regarding this property. Motion passed unanimously by all members present.

12. **Informational Items/Correspondence:**

a. **Updated 2016 Suspense Calendar:**

Board has reviewed the updated 2016 Suspense Calendar to include the Hunter Education schedules and the legislative forums that the Chamber puts on throughout the year. The board found it to be laid out consistent with County Conservation needs for the upcoming year.

- b. **Marketing plan:** This is regarding the marketing plan that was drawn up in 2014. Not much has been done, officially, toward this plan specifically. However, Director Lee has been utilizing resources available. Will be having staff's input during future staff meetings and working toward a better outline of branding what we do and what we have to offer. Many of our citizens don't realize that Starr's Cave Park & Preserve, the Nature Center, Big Hollow are even connected with Des Moines County Conservation. Need to work toward getting that word out. We do not have the resources to start or create something new but we can do a better job of telling our story to the public for their support. Thoughts, ideas and suggestions are welcome.

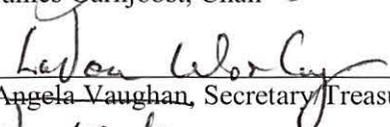
- c. **Budget Update.** Director Lee updated the board on the process currently underway between the Supervisors and County Bargaining Units. They are not currently close to arriving at an agreement and one of the items proposed by the Supervisors is the addition of a percentage portion of individual and family health care being shouldered by the employee. Should that happen then any movement made previously by Conservation Staff to be have wages brought in line with the current 10 step increase would be negated. Director Lee wished to make sure that the Board was aware of this as it deters being able to finalize numbers for the budget which is required to be completed, published with a public hearing and certified to the State of Iowa not later than March 15, 2016.

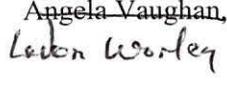
- d. **Other:** Chairman Garnjobst would like to have the board updated regarding the whole process surrounding the concerts held at the Nature Center.

13. **Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.**

Next meeting will be held at the Des Moines County Administration Office at 13700 Washington Road in West Burlington, IA. Meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday March 02, 2016. The public is welcome.


James Garnjobst, Chair


Angela Vaughan, Secretary/Treasurer


LaVon Worley